

Mind Sports Olympiad 2003

by Alexander Baron

The Mind Sports Olympiad 2003 was held on campus at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) from August 16-25. Although it has some way to go before it recaptures its glory days when the formerly London-based event drew thousands of entries from across the globe. Attendance was well up on last year's disappointing four hundred or so when it was held outside London for the first time, at Loughborough University. A personal bonus was that I won two medals this year — two more than last year! — including my first chess medal since the event started in 1997, although my overall performance was not that good.

I entered the Weekend Minor, and was somewhat surprised when arbiter and controller Gerald Jacobs told me I was top seed for the Major. I was even more surprised that my slow-play grade was 150 and that I didn't have a rapid-play grade as although I hadn't played a slow-play since 2001 I had played the rapid-play and blitz events at Loughborough, my only over the board chess for two years.

At UMIST, by and large, I played up to my grade, drawing in the first round with a player I'd beaten twice before, but then winning three in a row against new opponents, one of whom played like a lemon, but the other two were tough games. Then I fell at the last fence, throwing away a totally won position, refusing a draw en route (an offer I thought was a joke). This unbelievable loss left me seething with selfanger right up until the last day when I picked up my second medal.

Finishing with a mere three and a half points out of 5, I expected to come precisely nowhere, but on the Monday, Gerald told me that I had won a medal. This could only have been the bronze I thought, and it was, although it was probably won by default. Dean Hartley, a talented disabled player, had been doing well but had lost in the fourth round, and, homesick for his dog - of all things - he left early, which left me to collect the undisputed bronze and a cheque for fifty pounds.

I played, too, in the Olympiad Championship, a 15 round 25 minute tournament held over five days. My score of six out of fifteen sounds atrocious but actually it wasn't quite so bad. I skipped two

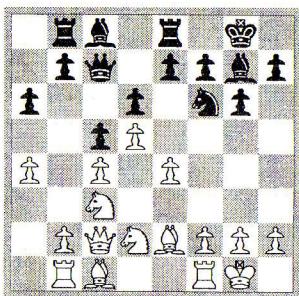
rounds to enter the speed reading and was awarded a solitary half point bye, and in the last two rounds I had to play two masters. The tournament was won by Danny Gormally. At one of the poker tournaments I introduced him as International Grandmaster Danny Gormally, but he told me later that he was only an IM. That may be the case, but he is a GM in all but name as he proved by winning every single game for a perfect 15/15. I had the somewhat dubious privilege of playing him in the last round, protesting vainly that the eight points difference in our scores meant that I should be playing someone lower down. I did, though, manage to treble heavy pieces on the queen file, but his uncastled king was never in any serious danger.

In spite of my dismal score I played some memorable games. Daniel Sullivan, who won the silver in the Weekend Major, blundered badly against me in this position:

It remains to be seen what White's rook is doing on b1 against a Benoni set-up, especially since he has played a4. After the mind-blowing unforced error b4?? I played simply ...cxb4, and he felt he had nothing better than to resign.

My most memorable game though was in round 10 against David Knox, a stronger local player who stormed off in a huff after blundering badly in a won ending. To be fair, I did have a won position out of the opening which I nearly threw away. In spite of being a bit of a stone-faced character, Knox returned and helped me piece together the score, and in the 14th round he proved he had a sense of humour playing 1...a6 and 2...h6 against Gormally. Obviously he felt he had no chance against a player graded over 70 points above him, and tried to take him out of the book and perhaps unnerve him as Miles did once against Karpov. He nearly succeeded, even though he lost his queen for rook and minor piece, and Gormally needed all his resources to take a full point from him.

Gormally faded a bit in the next tournament, losing two games. He put this down to tiredness. As I had shared his 2 a.m. Cantonese dining in Manchester's Chinatown and late night poker sessions I



hastened to agree!

Stephane Nicolet of France won both the Othello Blitz and 10 x 10 World Championships, but French supremo Marc Tastet turned up in time to win both the Quickplay Championship and the European Championship, the latter with a perfect ten out of ten. The speed reading was won, as ever, by Ann Jones, who stands head and shoulders above everyone else in this event.

I picked up my gold medal on the last day, winning the No Limit Texas Hold 'Em, and went away ecstatic. Some tournaments went on until the last minute, most notably the Pacru Olympiad Championship. This is a new game which can be downloaded from the Internet.

The contingent of overseas players was boosted in a somewhat unusual manner. According to his pass, multi-medal winner Joey Ho was a domicile of Hong Kong, although he told me that he and his younger brother lived in Barnet and had travelled up with the organiser. I found out later that he was born in Ealing! Also, Danny Gormally was listed in the final Olympiad bulletin as from Switzerland, although curiously Italian multi-gamester Dario de Toffoli was listed under England! Perhaps someone was having a joke?

According to Mind Sports supremo David Levy, this will be the event's permanent home, which is bad news for Londoners, who (rightly) believe their city is the centre of the known universe, but the good news is that next year's event will be bigger and better, and after a rocky couple of years MSO is back on track as the world's premier mind sports event.

The game below is my 4th round game in the Weekend Major against James Thomson. The reader should bear in mind that this game was played at a time control of 80 minutes for *all* moves.

Baron, A – Thomson, J [B18]. Mind Sports Olympiad, Major (4), 2003.

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♕f5 5.♘g3 ♕g6 6.♘f3 h6? A waste of time as White hasn't played (the book) h4. 7.♘e5 ♕h7 8.♗h5! g6 9.♗d1! ♘d7 10.♗xd7 ♘xd7 11.♗e2 ♘f6 12.0-0 g5 13.c4 0-0-0 14.♗a4 ♘b8 15.♗e3 b6 16.b4 ♘e4 17.♗ac1 ♘xg3 18.hxg3 ♘e4 19.f3 ♘g6 20.♗fd1 ♘g7 21.♗c3 ♘e6 22.♗a3 ♘d7 23.d5 cxd5 24.cxd5 ♘d6 25.♗b5 ♘c7 26.♗c6 ♘b2 27.♗xb6 ♘xa3 28.♗xc7+ ♘xc7 29.♗xa3 ♘xg3? 30.d6! ♘e5 31.♗a6 ♘e3+ 32.♗f1 ♘b6 33.♗xb6+ axb6 34.dxe7 f5 35.♗d8+ ♘c7 36.♗xh8 1-0

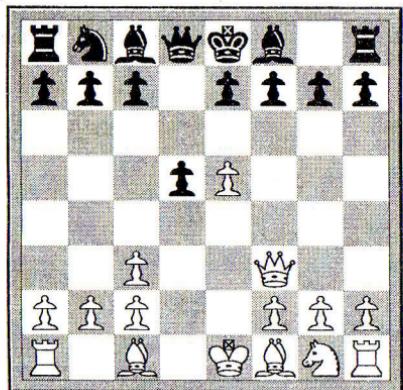
Alekhine's Defence

B02

□ Baron, A
■ Knox, D

Mind Sports Oly., Major, 2003.

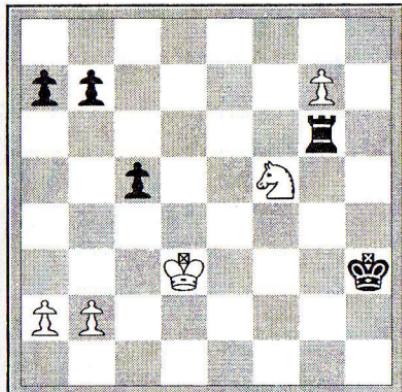
1.e4 $\mathbb{Q}f6$ **2.e5** $\mathbb{Q}d5$ **3.Qc3** This move constitutes the Sämisch Attack, since it was first played in the game Sämisch-Alekhine, Budapest 1921.[†] (Ed.) **3...Qxc3** **4.dxc3 d5!** This is the book move, and the one which most players either know or find. [N.B. In his 1981 book, Vlastimil Hort preferred 4...d6. (Ed.)] **5.Qf3** The Sämisch is my pet line against the Alekhine; it is incredibly difficult to crack, even for very strong players.



[5.Qf4 c5 6.Qf3 Qc6 7.Qc4 (7.Qd2? Qg4 8.0-0-0 e6 9.h3? Qxf3 10.gxf3 Qc7 11.Qg3 c4! 12.f4 g6 13.Qb1 h5 14.Qh4 Qe7 15.Qg5 Qxg5 16.fxg5 Qxe5 17.Qe3 0-0 18.Qe2 Qc6 19.f4 Qe7 20.Qhg1 Qf5 21.Qf2 Qfe8 22.Qge1 b5 23.Qf1 a5 24.Qe5 b4 25.Qe1 Qeb8 26.Qa1 Qb6 27.Qd2 Qab8 28.Qb1 Qd6 29.Qg2 Qb5 30.cxb4 c3 31.bxc3 Qxc3 32.Qb3

axb4 33.a3 Qa6 34.Qe3 Qba8 35.Qexc3 bxc3 36.Qc1 Qc5 37.Qa2 Qc4 38.Qa1 Qxb3 0-1 Yates,F-Capablanca,J, Moscow 1925.) 7...d4 8.Qd3 g6 9.0-0 Qg7 10.h3 h6 11.Qe1 g5 12.Qg3 Qb6 13.Qb1 g4 14.Qh4 gxh3 15.Qh5 Qd8 16.Qf5 hxg2 17.Qxc8 Qxc8 18.Qf5 Qe6 19.Qh4 Qf8 20.Qe4 Qg8 21.f4 Qg6 22.Qbe1 Qd7 23.Qd6 exd6 24.f5 Qg7 25.Qf3 Qg5 26.Qxg5 hxg5 27.e6+ Qc7 28.e7 Qc6 29.Qh3 Qb8 30.Qh7 Qe8 31.Qxg2 Qc7 32.Qg1 f6 33.Qg6 1-0 Toothill,J-De Coninck,G, corr 1998; 5.c4 c6 6.Qf3 (6.f4 Qf5 7.Qe3 e6 8.Qd2 Qe7 9.0-0-0 Qd7 10.Qe2 0-0 11.g4 Qe4 12.Qf3 Qxf3 13.Qxf3 Qb6 14.cxd5 Qxd5 15.Qxd5 ½-½ Povah,N-Cafferty,B, Birmingham 1977.) 6...Qg4 7.h3 Qxf3 8.Qxf3 e6 9.cxd5 Qxd5 10.Qxd5 cxd5 11.c4 Qb4+ 12.Qd2 Qxd2+ 13.Qxd2 Qc6 14.f4 0-0-0 15.Qe3 h6 16.Qd1 Qe7 17.cxd5 Qxd5+ 18.Qf3 Qb6 19.Qe2 Qb8 20.Qxd8+ Qxd8 21.Qd1 Qxd1 22.Qxd1 Qc7 23.Qb3 Qc6 24.Qe4 Qc5 25.Qd3 Qd5 26.g3 b5 27.a4 a6 ½-½ Kuzmin,G-Alburt,L, URS-Ch. Leningrad 1974.] 5...Qc6 [5...c5 6.Qd3 Qc6 7.Qg3 c4 8.Qe2 Qf5 9.Qf3 e6 10.Qd1 h6 11.0-0 Qc7 12.Qe1 0-0-0 13.Qe3 Qe4 14.Qd4 a6 15.f3 Qh7 16.f4 Qxd4 17.Qxd4 (1-0)/48, Yong,D-Mohd,S, Genting Heights zt 1995.] 6.Qg3 The point! 6...Qf5 7.Qd3 Qxd3 8.cxd3 e6 The book ended at White's 8th move. 9.Qg5 f6 10.Qxf6 gxf6 11.Qh4 Qe5 12.0-0-0 Qg6 13.Qe1 Qf7 14.Qh3 Qd6 15.Qg3 e5 16.d4 h5 17.dxe5 fxe5 18.Qf5+ Probably better would have

been $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ at once, winning a pawn and simplifying instead of as happened, winning a pawn with complications and then losing the exchange. 18... $\mathbb{W}f6$ 19. $\mathbb{W}d7+$ $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ 21. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{W}g6+$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}a1$ $\mathbb{Q}hd8$ 23. $\mathbb{W}h3$ c5 24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 25. $\mathbb{W}g3?$ A pointless move, losing a tempo. 25... $\mathbb{Q}f5!$ 26. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{W}xg4$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}g1$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 28.h3 g3 29. $\mathbb{W}xg3$ $\mathbb{Q}e3$ 30. $\mathbb{W}xe3$ $\mathbb{Q}xe3$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}g6$ Suddenly, White is the exchange down and all Black's problems have been solved. 32. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ d4 33.cxd4 $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ 34. $\mathbb{Q}b1$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 35. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ 36. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$ $\mathbb{Q}f5$ 37. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 38.g4+ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 39.g5 $\mathbb{Q}e2$ 40.g6 $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ 41. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ This knight on the rim looks really grim! 41... $\mathbb{Q}g1+$ 42. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ $\mathbb{Q}g3?$ 43. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$ $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 44.g7 $\mathbb{Q}g6$ 45. $\mathbb{Q}d3$



$\mathbb{Q}g4??$ Falling for the knight fork, whereas 45...b5 keeps Black in the game. (Ed.) 46.g8 \mathbb{W} $\mathbb{W}xg8$ 47. $\mathbb{Q}h6+$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 48. $\mathbb{Q}xg8$ 1-0

[†] See the Postscript page for this historic game. — *Editor.*



Great Escapes!

by John Hawkes

This new series kicks-off with a game where Ken Messere salvaged an extremely important career half-point. Members are invited to contribute their own most memorable Houdini acts to this new feature. Please send them to the Games Editor, preferably with notes (in .cbv or .pgn formats, if possible).

Ruy Lopez

C81

Masseev, L
 Messere, K

WCCC-5, sf03, 1962.

Notes by Ken Messere and John Hawkes. 1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$ $\mathbb{Q}c6$ 3. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ a6 4. $\mathbb{Q}a4$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 5.0-0 $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ 6.d4 b5 7. $\mathbb{Q}b3$ Richter's 7.d5 is a rare choice: 7...bxa4 (7... $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 8. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 9. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ d6 10. $\mathbb{Q}c6$ $\mathbb{W}d7$ 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ $\mathbb{W}g4$ 12. $\mathbb{W}xg4$ $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ 13. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ $\mathbb{Q}xa4$ 14. $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$ $\mathbb{Q}d7$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$ 1-0 Richter, K-Cortlever, Munich 1941.) 8.dxc6 d6 9. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ f5! 10. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$ $\mathbb{Q}c5$ 11.b4 axb3 12. $\mathbb{Q}xb3$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 13.c4 $\mathbb{Q}e7$ 14. $\mathbb{W}d5$ $\mathbb{Q}f6$ 15. $\mathbb{Q}b2$ e4 16. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ $\mathbb{W}xf6$ 17. $\mathbb{Q}fd4$ $\mathbb{Q}f4$ 18. $\mathbb{W}a5$ 0-0 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ (19. $\mathbb{W}xc7$ $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 20. $\mathbb{W}b6$ $\mathbb{W}g6$) 19... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ 20. $\mathbb{Q}d1$ $\mathbb{Q}e6$ 21. $\mathbb{W}b4$ $\mathbb{Q}e8$ 22. $\mathbb{Q}d2$ $\mathbb{Q}c8$ 23.h3 $\mathbb{Q}fe7$ 24. $\mathbb{W}a5$ $\mathbb{W}g6$ 25. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ $\mathbb{W}f7$ 26. $\mathbb{W}c3$ $\mathbb{Q}h5$ 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ f4 28. $\mathbb{Q}e1$ f3 29.gxf3 $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ 30. $\mathbb{Q}h1$ (30. $\mathbb{Q}h2$ $\mathbb{W}f4+$ 31. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ e3!) 30...exf3 0-1 Röthgen, R-Popp, F,